

Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP)

Parent/Caregiver Information

Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU)

What is CPAP?

CPAP stands for Continuous Positive Airway Pressure. It is a special type of breathing circuit that is used to help your baby's breathing. It is called Nasal CPAP or NCPAP because the device fits around the nose area. There are many reasons why a baby may require CPAP. These include:

- Being born early (premature)
- Babies who have an infection
- Infants of diabetic mothers
- A baby may require CPAP if their breathing becomes labored at any time. CPAP will assist the baby to breathe and maintain adequate oxygen levels

How does CPAP work?

CPAP assists your baby to breathe, by supporting their own breathing efforts. CPAP also stimulates a preterm baby to breathe more regularly if they forget to breathe (apnoea). Medical Air (and Oxygen if needed) is delivered through tubes that are attached to a nose mask or prongs. These fit over your baby's nose area. This flow of air/oxygen is directed to the lungs and keeps the air sacs partially inflated. Your baby will alternate between using a CPAP mask or prongs throughout the day and night. This is to help prevent any pressure areas developing around your baby's nose.

The CPAP system is attached to a humidifier that warms and moistens the flow of air/oxygen, before it reaches your baby's nostrils. Your baby may require CPAP for a few days or a few months. This

will be dependent on your baby's age, when they were born and their medical condition.

During CPAP a tube, called an orogastric tube, will be passed from your baby's mouth into their stomach. Some of the air/oxygen flow can enter the baby's stomach and cause it to fill up. The orogastric tube removes any of this trapped stomach air.

If your baby needs to have an operation or is recovering from one, CPAP may not be immediately advisable. If they require respiratory assistance, other forms of respiratory support will be used and these will be discussed with you.

What can parents do?

Once your baby is settled on CPAP, you will be able to cuddle them, assist with their cares, change nappies and check their temperature. They will be able to feed when they are stable and this will be through the orogastric tube.

You can cuddle your baby and are encouraged to get your baby up for quiet time.

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